

## CHECKLIST ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT

**Project Name:** Alhambra Road Fiber Land Use License / Utility Easement  
**Proposed**  
**Implementation Date:** September 2019  
**Proponent:** Century Link QC  
**Location:** Sec 16 T8N R2W  
**County:** Jefferson  
**Trust:** Common Schools

### I. TYPE AND PURPOSE OF ACTION

Century Link is proposing to install approximately 1300 feet of fiber optic cable and four (4) Fiber markers within its existing Right of Way, Document No. D-6721, Application No. 7554 on State Trust Land in Section 16, T8N, R3W next to a buried copper telephone line. The installation of the new fiber is to upgrade voice and data in the service area. The buried distribution line will encumber approximately 1.37 acres. The ROW corridor is 20 feet wide and extends 3000 feet.

### II. PROJECT DEVELOPMENT

#### 1. PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT, AGENCIES, GROUPS OR INDIVIDUALS CONTACTED:

*Provide a brief chronology of the scoping and ongoing involvement for this project. List number of individuals contacted, number of responses received, and newspapers in which notices were placed and for how long. Briefly summarize issues received from the public.*

Agencies, Groups or Individuals Scoped:	Response:
DNRC, Landowner	Neutral-Landowner
Qwest Corp. d/b/a Century Link QC	Proponent is in favor of the project
Lessee	Vacant tract

#### 2. OTHER GOVERNMENTAL AGENCIES WITH JURISDICTION, LIST OF PERMITS NEEDED:

*Examples: cost-share agreement with U.S. Forest Service, 124 Permit, 3A Authorization, Air Quality Major Open Burning Permit.*

DNRC is not aware of other government agencies with jurisdiction. The proponent is responsible to obtain any necessary permits.

#### 3. ALTERNATIVE DEVELOPMENT:

*Describe alternatives considered and, if applicable, provide brief description of how the alternatives were developed. List alternatives that were considered but eliminated from further analysis and why.*

**Proposed Action Alternative:** Issuing the Land Use License as proposed; issuing Century Link a new easement to account for newly encumbered state land.

**No Action Alternative:** Deny the applications for a Land Use License and an easement to account for newly encumbered state land.

### III. IMPACTS ON THE PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT

- *RESOURCES potentially impacted are listed on the form, followed by common issues that would be considered.*
- *Explain POTENTIAL IMPACTS AND MITIGATIONS following each resource heading.*
- *Enter "NONE" if no impacts are identified or the resource is not present.*

#### 4. GEOLOGY AND SOIL QUALITY, STABILITY AND MOISTURE:

*Consider the presence of fragile, compactable or unstable soils. Identify unusual geologic features. Specify any special reclamation considerations. Identify direct, indirect, and cumulative effects to soils.*

Soils in the project area include: 71% is Breeton coarse sandy loams (1800 D); 3.6% is Breeton Cometcrik loams (1803C); 12.9 % are Elmark, bouldery-Lumpgulch, very bouldery-Rock outcrop complex, (1945E); and 12% are Elmark, bouldery-Hoyt-Shaboom, very bouldery, complex (1946E) These soils are considered very moderately to poorly suited this activity.

**Proposed Action Alternative:** The expected disturbance will occur during the installation of the underground fiber optic line. A road, used to access several residences, accesses the area and the underground line will be buried adjacent to this road prism next to existing underground utilities. Standard LUL stipulations would address reclamation. No long-lasting impacts to fragile, compactable, or unstable soils or any unusual geologic features are anticipated.

**No Action Alternative:** No impacts to the geology or soil characteristics would occur.

#### 5. WATER QUALITY, QUANTITY AND DISTRIBUTION:

*Identify important surface or groundwater resources. Consider the potential for violation of ambient water quality standards, drinking water maximum contaminant levels, or degradation of water quality. Identify direct, indirect, and cumulative effects to water resources.*

Prickly Pear Creek and associated wet area is adjacent to the project area on the other side of the railroad grade. The disturbance will occur during the installation of the underground utility line; however, this activity should occur an acceptable distance away from the creek and resulting sediment would be contained by railroad facilities. Century Link is responsible for obtaining all permits necessary to work in or around the stream. Standard LUL stipulations would address reclamation.

**Proposed Action Alternative:** No direct or cumulative impacts to water quality are anticipated as a result of the proposed action.

**No Action Alternative:** No impacts to the water quality, quantity, and/or distribution will occur.

#### 6. AIR QUALITY:

*What pollutants or particulate would be produced (i.e. particulate matter from road use or harvesting, slash pile burning, prescribed burning, etc)? Identify the Airshed and Impact Zone (if any) according to the Montana/Idaho Airshed Group. Identify direct, indirect, and cumulative effects to air quality.*

In general, the quality of air standards is fair in this area with fair to good ventilation and would only be temporarily impacted by the proposal.

**Proposed Action Alternative:** Short-duration increases in dust from construction activities associated with underground fiber optic will occur. Minimal direct or cumulative effects are expected to occur to air quality as a result of the proposed action.

**No Action Alternative:** No impacts to air quality will occur.

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## 7. VEGETATION COVER, QUANTITY AND QUALITY:

*What changes would the action cause to vegetative communities? Consider rare plants or cover types that would be affected. Identify direct, indirect, and cumulative effects to vegetation.*

The Montana Natural Heritage Program list zero (0) plant species of concern within T8N R3W.  
See attached.

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## 8. TERRESTRIAL, AVIAN AND AQUATIC LIFE AND HABITATS:

*Consider substantial habitat values and use of the area by wildlife, birds or fish. Identify direct, indirect, and cumulative effects to fish and wildlife.*

This tract is used by a variety of wildlife, including ungulates (mule deer, whitetail deer, and elk), small to large sized predators (weasels, skunks, red fox, and coyotes), numerous species of small mammals (mice, voles, ground squirrels, rabbits, etc.), various raptors (red-tailed hawks, golden eagles, bald eagles, American kestrels, prairie falcons, etc.) upland game birds (mountain grouse), and numerous non-game bird species (a wide variety of migrant and resident bird species associated with available habitats). The proposed project would temporarily displace these wildlife species.

**Proposed Action Alternative:** Temporary disturbances may occur during the proposed project duration. No lasting impacts to terrestrial, avian, and/or aquatic life and/or habitats are anticipated.

**No Action Alternative:** No impacts to terrestrial, avian, and/or aquatic life and habitats will occur.

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## 9. UNIQUE, ENDANGERED, FRAGILE OR LIMITED ENVIRONMENTAL RESOURCES:

*Consider any federally listed threatened or endangered species or habitat identified in the project area. Determine effects to wetlands. Consider Sensitive Species or Species of special concern. Identify direct, indirect, and cumulative effects to these species and their habitat.*

The Montana Natural Heritage Program lists 10 animal *species of concern*, 0 *potential species of concern* and 0 *special status species* within this township. The 10 animal species of concern are: Wolverine, Hoary Bat, Little Brown Myotis, Grizzly Bear, Evening Grosbeak, Northern Grosbeak, Pileated Woodpecker, Clark's Nutcracker, Flammulated Owl, and Westslope Cutthroat Trout. The area wildlife would be affected by temporary displacement during proposed project.

**Proposed Action Alternative:** Temporary disturbances may occur during the proposed project duration. No lasting impacts to unique, endangered, fragile, or limited environmental resources habitats are anticipated.

**No Action Alternative:** No impacts to unique, endangered, fragile, or limited environmental resources will occur.

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## 10. HISTORICAL AND ARCHAEOLOGICAL SITES:

*Identify and determine direct, indirect, and cumulative effects to historical, archaeological or paleontological resources.*

A Class I (literature review) level review was conducted by the DNRC staff archaeologist for the area of potential effect (APE). This entailed inspection of project maps, DNRC's sites/site leads database, land use records, General Land Office Survey Plats, and control cards. The Class I search revealed that no cultural or paleontological resources have been identified in the APE, and that the APE was inventoried previously to Class III standards. Because of a lack of cultural resources and because the APE on state land has been thoroughly disturbed with past highway construction work, no additional archaeological investigative work will be conducted in response to this proposed development. However, if previously unknown cultural or paleontological materials

are identified during project related activities, all work will cease until a professional assessment of such resources can be made.

**Proposed Action Alternative:** No impacts to historical, archeological, and/or paleontological resources are anticipated due to the scope and nature of this project.

**No Action Alternative:** No impacts to historical, archeological, and/or paleontological resources will occur.

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#### **11. AESTHETICS:**

*Determine if the project is located on a prominent topographic feature, or may be visible from populated or scenic areas. What level of noise, light or visual change would be produced? Identify direct, indirect, and cumulative effects to aesthetics.*

The proposed project area represents a typical rural and partially subdivided community found in this geographic area in Jefferson County, Montana. The project would have minimal impacts to the area's aesthetics. Noise and dust increases would occur during the project. These impacts would cease as soon as the project is completed.

**Proposed Action Alternative:** No impacts to the aesthetics are anticipated.

**No Action Alternative:** No impacts to the aesthetics will occur.

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#### **12. DEMANDS ON ENVIRONMENTAL RESOURCES OF LAND, WATER, AIR OR ENERGY:**

*Determine the amount of limited resources the project would require. Identify other activities nearby that the project would affect. Identify direct, indirect, and cumulative effects to environmental resources.*

The area does not contain limited resources. Nearby activities consist mostly of sparse suburban residential and ranching operations.

**Proposed Action Alternative** No impacts to the demands of environmental resources such as land, water, air, and/or energy resources are anticipated.

**No Action Alternative:** No impacts to the demands of environmental resources such as land, water, air, and/or energy resources will occur.

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#### **13. OTHER ENVIRONMENTAL DOCUMENTS PERTINENT TO THE AREA:**

*List other studies, plans or projects on this tract. Determine cumulative impacts likely to occur as a result of current private, state or federal actions in the analysis area, and from future proposed state actions in the analysis area that are under MEPA review (scoped) or permitting review by any state agency.*

DNRC is not aware of other plans or projects in the area.

**Proposed Action Alternative:** No impacts to studies, plans, and/or projects pertinent to this area are anticipated to occur.

**No Action Alternative:** No impacts to studies, plans, and/or projects will occur.

#### IV. IMPACTS ON THE HUMAN POPULATION

- *RESOURCES potentially impacted are listed on the form, followed by common issues that would be considered.*
- *Explain POTENTIAL IMPACTS AND MITIGATIONS following each resource heading.*
- *Enter "NONE" if no impacts are identified or the resource is not present.*

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##### 14. HUMAN HEALTH AND SAFETY:

*Identify any health and safety risks posed by the project.*

The proposed project would create human health and/or safety risks associated with the installation of an underground utility line. Traffic on the access road would be temporarily disrupted.

**Proposed Action Alternative:** Century Link QC is responsible to identify and mitigate the risks associated with the installation.

**No Action Alternative:** No impacts to human health and/or safety risks will occur.

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##### 15. INDUSTRIAL, COMMERCIAL AND AGRICULTURE ACTIVITIES AND PRODUCTION:

*Identify how the project would add to or alter these activities.*

**Proposed Action Alternative:** No lasting impacts to industrial, commercial and agricultural activities/production are anticipated.

**No Action Alternative:** No impacts to industrial, commercial and agricultural activities/production will occur.

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##### 16. QUANTITY AND DISTRIBUTION OF EMPLOYMENT:

*Estimate the number of jobs the project would create, move or eliminate. Identify direct, indirect, and cumulative effects to the employment market.*

The project would be completed in a relatively short time frame and it would not create permanent jobs.

**Proposed Action Alternative:** No lasting impacts to quantity and distribution of employment are anticipated.

**No Action Alternative:** No impacts to quantity and distribution of employment will occur.

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##### 17. LOCAL AND STATE TAX BASE AND TAX REVENUES:

*Estimate tax revenue the project would create or eliminate. Identify direct, indirect, and cumulative effects to taxes and revenue.*

**Proposed Action Alternative:** The project would not have any measurable effects to local or state tax revenues.

**No Action Alternative:** No impacts to the state tax base and/or tax revenues will occur.

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##### 18. DEMAND FOR GOVERNMENT SERVICES:

*Estimate increases in traffic and changes to traffic patterns. What changes would be needed to fire protection, police, schools, etc.? Identify direct, indirect, and cumulative effects of this and other projects on government services*

**Proposed Action Alternative:** The proposal would not have any impacts on traffic or government services.

**No Action Alternative:** No impacts to traffic, road uses, or government services will occur.

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**19. LOCALLY ADOPTED ENVIRONMENTAL PLANS AND GOALS:**

*List State, County, City, USFS, BLM, Tribal, and other zoning or management plans, and identify how they would affect this project.*

DNRC is not aware of other plans or projects in the area.

**Proposed Action Alternative:** No impacts to local environmental plans and goals are anticipated occur.

**No Action Alternative:** No impacts to local environmental plans and goals will occur.

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**20. ACCESS TO AND QUALITY OF RECREATIONAL AND WILDERNESS ACTIVITIES:**

*Identify any wilderness or recreational areas nearby or access routes through this tract. Determine the effects of the project on recreational potential within the tract. Identify direct, indirect, and cumulative effects to recreational and wilderness activities.*

Legal, public access does exist to this parcel of state land in Section 16, T8N, R3W. Project implementation may occur during general hunting season. Temporary impacts may occur. Generally, hunting opportunities are limited in the project area due to the proximity to homes and Interstate 15.

**Proposed Action Alternative:** The proposed action is not expected to impact general recreational and wilderness activities on this state tract.

**No Action Alternative:** No impacts to the quality of recreational and wilderness activities will occur.

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**21. DENSITY AND DISTRIBUTION OF POPULATION AND HOUSING:**

*Estimate population changes and additional housing the project would require. Identify direct, indirect, and cumulative effects to population and housing.*

The proposal does not include any changes to housing or developments.

**Proposed Action Alternative:** The proposal does not include any changes to housing or developments. No direct or cumulative effects to population or housing are anticipated.

**No Action Alternative:** No impacts to the density and/or distribution of population and housing will occur.

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**22. SOCIAL STRUCTURES AND MORES:**

*Identify potential disruption of native or traditional lifestyles or communities.*

**Proposed Action Alternative:** No impacts to the areas social structures, native/traditional lifestyles, or communities are anticipated to occur.

**No Action Alternative:** No impacts social structures, native/traditional lifestyles, or communities will occur.

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**23. CULTURAL UNIQUENESS AND DIVERSITY:**

*How would the action affect any unique quality of the area?*

**Proposed Action Alternative:** No impacts to the areas cultural uniqueness and/or diversity are anticipated to occur.

**No Action Alternative:** No impacts to the areas cultural uniqueness and/or diversity will occur.

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**24. OTHER APPROPRIATE SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC CIRCUMSTANCES:**

*Estimate the return to the trust. Include appropriate economic analysis. Identify potential future uses for the analysis area other than existing management. Identify direct, indirect, and cumulative economic and social effects likely to occur as a result of the proposed action.*

**Proposed Action Alternative:** The proposed project would allow access to state land to install an underground utility line. Compensation to the trust beneficiary would total \$200.00 for the land use license. This is equal to the minimum amount required by the REMB fee schedule. Additional revenue will be realized for the utility easement for the permanent encumbrance of the utility. This total is \$5,533.43 calculated at land values equaling \$4,039/acre time 1.37 acres. This Land Use License and forthcoming utility easement should not impact future uses or income potential to this tract of state trust land.

**No Action Alternative:** No impacts to the social and economic circumstances will occur.

<b>EA Checklist Prepared By:</b>	<b>Name:</b> John Huston	<b>Date:</b> 8/6/2019
	<b>Title:</b>	

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**V. FINDING**

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**25. ALTERNATIVE SELECTED:**

**Proposed Alternative** – Approve the project as proposed, issue the land use license and recommend approval of the utility easement to install an underground electric line on State Trust Land.

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**26. SIGNIFICANCE OF POTENTIAL IMPACTS:**

As proposed, the installation of the buried utility line on State Trust Land in Section 16, T8N, R3W is not expected to result in any direct, indirect or cumulative adverse effects to the project area. Standard LUL stipulations regarding reclamation and noxious weed control will appear in the license. Compliance with these stipulations will be monitored.

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**27. NEED FOR FURTHER ENVIRONMENTAL ANALYSIS:**

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EIS

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More Detailed EA

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No Further Analysis

<b>EA Checklist Approved By:</b>	<b>Name:</b> Andy Burgoyne
	<b>Title:</b> CLO Trust Land Program Manager
<b>Signature:</b> 	
<b>Date:</b> 8/7/19	

